

State of Governance of the University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract: *This study sought to investigate the state of governance in the University of Eastern Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to document the characteristics of the key informants; decode the meaning of governance from the perspective of the key informants; determine the state of governance of the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) in terms of transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and participation; find out the constraints in the attainment of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university in terms of issues or concerns. The University of Eastern Philippines is the locale of the study. The researchers used the qualitative approach particularly case study with observation, scrutiny of secondary documents, focus group discussions and interviews were used for data collection from the key informants composed of the former president, the current president and vice-presidents, deans, heads of offices and students' leaders of the university. The study revealed that a majority of the key informants were master's and doctorate degree holders; served the university's stakeholders for a long period of time; and attended many trainings/seminars along their respective fields of specialization. Thirteen (13) constructs evolved on the meaning of governance were as follows: leading, management, effective and efficiency, inspiring, proper utilization of resources, transparency, controlling, and service delivery, supervision, planning, organizing, following procedure and dealing with people. The key informants answered that the University of Eastern Philippines were practicing some indicators of good governance like transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, and participation. Hiring of non-vertically articulated faculty, poor maintenance of school buildings and facilities, slow transactions in some offices, and political interventions were some of the constraints. Issues/concerns be given preferential attention to fully comply with the prescriptions on good governance for the University of Eastern Philippines attain its vision, mission, goals and objectives.*

Keywords: State, governance, participation, transparency, accountability

1. Introduction

The University of Eastern Philippines continues to provide its students quality education and it is reflected on the numbers of graduates who took the national licensure examination. The administration, staff, and its faculty are doing their bests in order to attain the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university. Despite of these efforts still the parameters used to measure its performance undeniably did not meet the world's standards of quality education.

Literatures pertaining to quality education indicate that there are several issues and concerns that need to be addressed in order to improve the performance of any University. Durban and Catalan found out that some of these are the reduction of budget allocation which resulted to the lack of instructional materials, inadequate facilities and lack of training for professional growth, the curriculum that is not responsive to the basic needs of the country, the constant implementation of programs in education which are not properly monitored, the globalization of education, too much politics in education, and the values of the people, especially of few teachers, the reason why they failed to transform their students.

The non-involvement of the university stakeholders to assist and support the University administration to perform at its best is one of the prescriptions embracing the concept of good governance and can be another reason why the University of Eastern Philippines did not land among the 277 top performing universities in the country.

Further, the concept of school governance embraces the notion that the exercise of power in decision making are shared tasks and responsibilities of all not just by the governing body of the university. Moreover, de Boer et al. said that new governance approaches are at the forefront of discussions on public sector reforms, including higher education and research. Kooiman and Mayntz concluded that rethinking governance has led to new institutional arrangements in coordinating the public sectors. Authorities and powers for the allocation of (public) goods and services have been redistributed across the various policy levels. In many countries, coordination has changed from a classical form of state-dominated regulation in parallel with professional self-governance in which various actors at various policy levels govern the system.

Governance has become part of the educational landscape and a contributory factor to the realization of the vision and missions of institutions of higher learning such as the University of Eastern Philippines, hence this research.

2. Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study seeks to investigate the state of governance of the University of Eastern Philippines. Specifically addressing the main objective through the following research objectives:

- 1) Document the characteristics of the key informants;
- 2) Decode the meaning of governance from the perspectives of the key informants;
- 3) Determine the participation of the key informants in the sharing of tasks and responsibilities to attain the mission

of the uep in terms of: transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, inclusiveness; and

- 4) Find out constraints in the attainment of the mission of the university of eastern philippines in terms of issues and concerns.

3. Methodology

The University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), which is located in the municipality of Catarman, the capital town of the province of Northern Samar, is the first state university in the entire Visayas having been converted from then Samar Institute of Technology (SIT) in 1964 by the virtue of Republic Act 4126. Said act mandates UEP “to primarily give technical and professional training, advanced instruction of scientific and technological researches”. In addition to this legal mandate, UEP, as with other state universities and colleges, is empowered to venture into production projects under the corporatization thrust to the national government through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Prior to its conversion to university stature, UEP as an educational institution has been in existence since 1918. It was first opened as the Catarman Farm School, Then it became the Catarman Agricultural School, later named as the Catarman Agricultural High School before it became SIT in 1957 and UEP in 1964. In 1999, the University acquired two satellite campuses per the integration policy of CHED, placing some formerly CHED-supervised educational institutions under the administrative and supervisory control of selected state universities and colleges with UEP as one of the host SUCs. The UEP system now has three separate campuses, viz: UEP Main at Catarman; UEP Laoang at Laoang and UEP Pedro Rebadulla Memorial campus at Catubig, all these host municipalities are in the province of Northern Samar.

Over a span of 95 years, the University has metamorphosed from an agricultural school to a comprehensive higher education institution. It has a range of academic offerings both in the undergraduate and in the graduate levels. These academic programs are distributed among the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources Arts and Communication; Business Administration and Accountancy; Education; Engineering; Law; Nursing; Science; Veterinary Medicine; and Graduate School.

A total of 62 undergraduate and 36 graduate programs (both master’s and doctoral level) are offered in the various academic units of the University’s main campus with a complement faculty of 405 and 194 administrative personnel. About 55 percent of the undergraduate and 15 percent of graduate programs have been accredited by the Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP), ranging from level 1 to 3 accreditation status.

The university four-fold functions- instruction, research, extension, and production, the university has for its goal to provide higher education based on access and equity, quality

and excellence, efficiency and effectiveness, and relevance and responsiveness.

This study used the descriptive method of research. The researchers conducted an in depth investigation about the state of governance in the University of Eastern Philippines, Catarman Northern Samar. Four methods of data collection to extract information needed were used in this study. These three methods were observation, scrutiny of secondary data, focus group discussion and interview. These methods were used by the researcher in validating the data gathered in this study. Observation was used by the researcher in generating information about the state of governance in the University of Eastern Philippines. The second method, the secondary data relevant to the study such as the special order, memoranda and minutes of records were gathered and scrutinized. In addition, the researchers conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to selected key informants for reinforcement of information needed.

The former and the current university presidents, vice presidents, deans, heads of units, Board of Regents particularly the faculty and student regents, alumni and student leaders were the key informants of the study because they are the primary stakeholders of the university and they are more knowledgeable about the technical aspect of the university. There were two sets of instruments in this study. The first set was used to interview the key informants who were the presidents, vice presidents, college deans, and heads of offices in the university. The other set of questionnaire was used as a guide question in the focus group discussion with the other key informants who were the student leaders, officers of the Alumni Association, Faculty Union and None Teaching Staff Association.

4. Findings

The study revealed that a majority of the key informants were master’s and doctorate degree holders; served the university’s stakeholders for a long period of time; and attended many trainings/seminars along their respective fields of specialization.

Thirteen (13) constructs were decoded on the meaning of governance. These constructs are as follows: leading, management, effective and efficient, inspiring, proper utilization of resources, transparency, controlling, service delivery, supervision, planning, organizing, following procedure and dealing with people. The governance in the University of Eastern Philippines in terms of transparency is clear and explicit or being practiced. The university has a Management Information System (MIS). The institution has also its own accessible website where “Transparency Seal” is regularly updated as to where the funds went. The university’s offices and college accomplishment reports were clearly posted against stated targets; information about office policies, programs and services were posted in proper places such as bulletin boards; the presence of Commission on Audit (COA) is practiced by the administration to satisfy the issues on transparency within the university.

The effectiveness of governance in the university was scrutinized through the responses of the key informants in

the interview and they had multiple responses. In terms of instruction, the university is effective because of the high caliber faculty members and accredited curricular programs offered. Evaluation of faculty performance was conducted regularly by the Director for Instruction Office. In terms of research and extension, the university is effective since it was able to attain its goals. In terms of production, the university is effective because it was able to produce thousands of money yearly to support the university's vision, mission, goals and objectives. On the administrative function of offices, the university is effective because the employees could do the assigned task within a reasonable time frame despite the limited facilities of their offices.

The governance of the university in terms of efficiency is present, observed and practiced. All of the key informants said that "the university ensures results that meet the needs of stakeholders". Heads of offices added that "they make the best use of resources". In terms of syllabi, teaching strategies and curriculum design university is efficient because the institution can even produce top-notch board passers.

The administrative function of the employees is efficient as well. Governance in the UEP in terms of accountability is highly practiced based on the multiple responses of the key informants. Proper utilization of power observed because heads of offices were "responsible in using governmental power in advancing public welfare", "act in accordance with the university code" and practiced the so-called "Public Office is a public trust". The university ensures that "transactions are freely available", "open and receptive to the hash power of public opinion", "provide enough and understandable information" and "complies with rules and regulation prescribed by the university". Governance in the university in terms of participation is highly practiced based on the responses of the key informants. The participation of faculty, students, alumni and other stakeholders in soliciting ideas in achieving the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university is observed. Heads of offices, president and former presidents, vice presidents, deans, student leaders and other stakeholders attempted to "pacify people who are in conflict"; the "bottom-up planning of the institution's development" is observed and being relay by the informants.

There were thirteen constraints in achieving good governance in the university, as follows: making clear strategic direction to the stakeholders of what the institution want to achieve, improvement of school and office facilities, attitude towards work, neglecting orders, rules and regulation mandated by the institution, hiring effective and efficient teachers, more Income Generate Projects (IGP), slow transactions, bottom up/ planning, political intervention, full implementation of faculty development plan, unfair and unjust distribution of task, computerization of enrolment and updating of website.

5. Conclusions

Governance has become part of the educational landscape and a contributory factor to the realization of the vision and mission of institutions of higher learning. At the university level, however, it necessitates the involvement of the

faculty, students, alumni and other stakeholders in the different aspects of governance in order to attain the so-called "good governance". The University of Eastern Philippines is an academic institution that produces quality and globally competitive graduates. The following are the conclusions and implications of this pragmatic investigation. The shared meaning of governance from the perspective of the key informants based on the analysis of the data in this study are as follows: leading, management, effective and efficient, inspiring, proper utilization of resources, transparency, controlling, service delivery, supervision, planning, organizing, following procedure and dealing with people.

This implies that the university as an educational institution needs the presence and drive of a team leader. The academic structure is composed of different stakeholders tasked to perform their specific roles. It indicates the importance of recognizing a person who will initiate and give direction in program, decision-making, clear vision, mission, goals and all aspects that will make a certain institution progressive. Recognition of leader in a certain institution can establish a hierarchical institution that will make the system simple and the relationship clear. Furthermore, good governance can be performed well if the stakeholders of the institution are knowledgeable and can perform well in accordance with their designation. Other stakeholders play also a crucial role in the university, their collaborative effort can create a great impact to the university in achieving its VMGO. The failure of one part of the system will affect the entire performance of the university.

Governance in terms of transparency in the University of Eastern Philippines is clear and visible or being practiced. The university has a Management Information System (MIS). The institution has also its own accessible website where "Transparency Seal" is regularly updated. The university's offices and colleges accomplishment reports are clearly posted. Information about office policies, programs and services are posted in proper places such as bulletin board. The presence of Commission on Audit (COA) is practiced by the administration to satisfy the issues on transparency within the university.

It implies that the university is open to the public for any clarification of all the documents or even financial aspect of the university. It also indicates that the university is not hiding some issues or anomaly in all aspects because there is an openness of documents by all stakeholders or even media practitioners.

Governance in the university is effective enough because it is comprised of the high caliber faculty members and accredited curricular program are regularly conducted. Regular evaluation of faculty performance is conducted by the Director for Instruction Office. Research and extension the university are effective in the since these offices were in able to attain its goals. Production of the university is also effective because it was able to produce money yearly to support the university's vision, mission, goals and objectives. On the administrative function of offices, the university is effective because employees can do the assigned task within a reasonable time frame despite of the

limited facilities of their offices. This implies that the university is effective in performing the four-fold function namely; instruction, research, extension and production because its goals are complied and attained by the university. The university is effective because employees keep the university system harmonious.

Governance in UEP in terms of efficiency in the university is present, observed and practiced. The university ensures results that meet the needs of stakeholders". Heads of offices added that, they make the best use of resources. In terms of syllabi, teaching strategies and curriculum design, the university is efficient because the institution can even produce topnotch board passers. On the administrative function, the employees are efficient as well.

This implies that the university is efficient despite the limited facilities and resources. The employees are efficient because they can perform their job despite of the constraints of resources and facilities.

Governance in UEP in terms of accountability is highly practiced. Proper utilization of power is observed because heads of offices are "responsible in using governmental power in advancing public welfare", "act in accordance with the university code" and practiced the so-called "Public Office is a Public Trust". The university ensures that "transactions are freely available", "open and receptive to the hash power of public opinion".

This implies that the employees in UEP are very responsible because they are performing in accordance to their job description. It also indicates the university is a "Public Trust" institution that caters to the needs of all the stakeholders.

Governance in terms of participation in UEP is highly practiced. The participation of faculty, students, alumni and other stakeholders in soliciting ideas in achieving the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university is observed. Heads of offices, president and former presidents, vice presidents, deans, student leaders and other stakeholders attempted to "pacify people who are in conflict"; the "bottom-up planning of the institution's development" is observed and being relay by the informants.

This implies that almost all stakeholders are knowledgeable and aware of the institution's vision, mission, goals and objectives. Participation is maximized when almost all are represented in every decision that the governance has to make.

The constraints in achieving good governance in the university are as follows: making clear strategic direction to the stakeholders of what the institution want to achieve, improvement of school and office facilities, attitude towards work, neglecting orders, rules and regulation mandated by the institution, hiring nonvertically articulated teachers, establishing Income Generate Projects (IGP), slow transactions, bottom-up planning, political intervention, full implementation of faculty development plan, unfair and unjust distribution of task, computerization of enrolment and updating of website.

This implies that achieving the so-called "good governance" is not just easy as writing the principles in the book. There are some factors to be considered as constraints in achieving it.

6. Recommendations

This study may not have covered all the very significant indicators of good governance in the University of Eastern Philippines. However, the significant insights that brought about the discoveries of governance, led the researchers to come up with the following recommendations:

- 1) It is believed that those who are holding higher position in the university be required to participate in a series seminar workshop, trainings along the topic of good governance to be initiated by the University Extension Office. This way, they could enrich their understanding on the real essence of good governance more specifically in the prioritization of services.
- 2) There will be tight establishment of stakeholders' relationship, which will comprise the institution. Academic institution plays a very important role in molding and producing quality students, advancing the interest of the people who felt that they are not part of the society. The meaning of governance does not only define what it is but how it is supposed to be practiced.
- 3) The issues and concerns raised by the key informants should be given attention by the authorities of the university to address the hindrances in achieving good governance.
- 4) The University Publication Media Affair Office (UPMAO) should establish a communication policy that will provide a guideline on smooth flow of communication.
- 5) Another study be conducted to include the two satellite campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines namely: UEP-Laoang and UEP-Catubig campuses.
- 6) A similar study be conducted to include other indicators of good governance such as rule of law, responsiveness, consensus-oriented, equity and inclusiveness.

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